

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method for implanting oral devices including the steps of:
making a first incision in the oral cavity:
inserting a tissue contourer into the first incision overlying a first edentulous ridge portion of the maxilla or mandible;
expanding the tissue contourer;
removing the tissue contourer; and
fixing an oral implant to the first edentulous ridge portion.
2. The method of claim 1, including the step of making a second incision in the oral cavity prior to the step of removing the tissue contourer.
3. The method of claim 2, including the step of making the second incision in mucosal tissue overlying the tissue contourer.
4. The method of claim 1, further including the step of waiting for the first incision to heal before the step of expanding the tissue contourer.
5. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of fixing an oral implant may include the step of fixing a dental endosseous implant, framework, scaffold, prosthetic, or grafting material to the first edentulous ridge portion.
6. The method of claim 1, wherein the first incision is made at one end of the first edentulous ridge portion.
7. The method of claim 6, further comprising the step of inserting a probe into the first incision.

8. A method of preparing mucosal tissue for an oral implant including the steps of:

making a first elongated incision in mucosal tissue in an edentulous gap that extends the length of the gap:

inserting a tissue contourer into the first elongated incision overlying a first edentulous ridge portion of the maxilla or mandible; and

expanding the tissue contourer.

9. The method of claim 8, further comprising the step of suturing the first elongated incision over the top of the tissue contourer.

10. The method of claim 8, further comprising the step of expanding the tissue contourer by a process selected from the group consisting of manually inserting fluid into the body, osmosis, releasing energy stored in the contourer, and bulk expansion.

11. The method of claim 8, further comprising the step of making the first elongated incision adjacent to and parallel to the top of the edentulous gap.

12. The method of claim 8, further comprising the step of permitting the first elongate incision to heal before the step of expanding the tissue contourer.

13. The method of claim 8, wherein the tissue contourer has a longitudinal axis and further wherein the step of inserting the tissue contourer includes the step of orienting the longitudinal axis of the tissue contourer parallel to the edentulous ridge.

14. The method of claim 8, further comprising the step of suturing mucosal tissue over the tissue contourer placed in the first elongate incision.

15. The method of claim 8, further comprising the steps of:

removing the tissue contourer; and
fixing an oral implant to the first edentulous ridge portion.

16. The method of claim 15, wherein the step of fixing an oral implant may include the step of fixing a dental endosseous implant, framework, scaffold, prosthetic, or grafting material to the first edentulous ridge portion.

17. A method for implanting oral devices including the steps of:
inserting a tissue contourer in a void beneath oral mucosal tissue;
expanding the tissue contourer;
removing the tissue contourer; and
fixing an oral implant to the first edentulous ridge portion.

18. The method of claim 17, wherein the step of fixing an oral implant may include the step of fixing a dental endosseous implant, framework, scaffold, prosthetic, or grafting material to the first edentulous ridge portion.

19. The method of claim 18, further comprising the step of expanding the tissue contourer by a process selected from the group consisting of manually inserting fluid into the body, osmosis, releasing energy stored in the contourer, and bulk expansion.

20. The method of claim 17, further comprising the step of abrasively removing periosteal tissue from the void.

21. The method of claim 8, further comprising a step of removing the tissue contourer and the step of abrasively removing periosteal tissue after the step of removing the tissue contourer, wherein the tissue removed is that tissue disposed between the tissue contourer and the first edentulous ridge during the step of expanding the tissue contourer.

22. The method of claim 17, further comprising the step of suturing mucosal tissue over the top of the tissue contourer.

23. The method of claim 22, wherein the step of expanding the tissue contourer includes the step of inflating the tissue expander.

24. The method of claim 22, wherein the step of expanding the tissue contourer includes the step of filling the tissue expander with fluid.

25. The method of claim 22, wherein the step of expanding the tissue contourer includes the step of expanding the tissue contourer by osmotic pressure.

26. The method of claim 17, further including the step of:
inserting an endoscope into a contourer-receiving void and examining the void.